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European Union

Biotechnology

EU approves two additional novel foods

2003

Approved by:

Justina Torry

U.S. Mission to the European Union, Brussels

Prepared by:

Sandie Kipe

Report Highlights:

On June 10, 2003 the European Commission approved two new novel foods for use as food ingredients following agreement by the Member States in the Standing Committee for Food Chain and Animal Health. The approvals are for two non-genetically modified products, noni juice and DHA-rich oil derived from microalgae.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
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Noni juice is the juice of an Indian mulberry, *morinda citrifolia*, which grows in Polynesia and other parts of South East Asia. The mature fruit is about the size of a potato and resembles a small breadfruit. The authorization concerns the juice of these fruits to be used as an ingredient in pasteurized fruit drinks. The U.S. based Morinda company submitted the request for approval.

DHA (*docosahexaenoic acid*) is a rich oil derived from the microalgae *Schiodochytrium*. DHA is a polyunsaturated fatty acid to be used in specified levels in dairy products, dairy analogues for vegans and lactose intolerant people, spreads and dressings, breakfast cereals, food supplements, dietary foods for medical purposes, and foods intended for use in energy restricted diets for weight reduction. The request for approval came from U.S. based Martek Biosciences Cooperation.

Novel foods are foods and food ingredients that have not been used in significant amounts for human consumption before May 15, 1997 and which fall into the following criteria: containing or consisting of genetically modified organisms (GMOs); produced from but not containing GMOs; contain a new intentionally modified primary molecular structure; consisting of or isolated from plants or animals, except for foods and food ingredients obtained by traditional propagating or breeding practices with a safe history; or, produced with a production process not currently used, where the production process changes the composition or structure of the food or food ingredient significantly. Several exceptions include: food additives, flavorings, and extraction solvents.

The European Commission through detailed rules regulates the use of novel foods. Novel foods must first undergo a safety assessment before being allowed into the European market. Companies interested in placing a novel food in the market must first submit an application including all scientific information and the required safety assessment. Only foods that are considered safe by the Standing Committee for Food Chain and Animal Health will be available on the market.

The committee has thus far approved 10 new novel foods, including the two newly approved. Also, two products have been denied approval to the European market, the herbal product Stevia Rebaudiana and Nangai nuts.

Visit our website: our website www.useu.be/agri/usda.html provides a broad range of useful information on EU import rules and food laws and allows easy access to USEU reports, trade information and other practical information. More information on novel foods can be found at:

<http://www.useu.be/agri/novelfood.html>

http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/fs/novel_food/nf_index_en.html.

E-mail: AgUSEUBrussels@fas.usda.gov

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